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The "Reconciliation" however is not yet over. The following morning an *arba* (Caucasian two-wheeled wagon) drawn by two oxen goes through the village and every family before whose house the *arba* halts is obliged to donate a chicken. In the evening a cartload of chickens arrives, destined for a special "Reconciliation" feast exclusively for women, on which occasion the groom by accepting some beer from his mother is finally "reconciled" also with her.

True, the "Reconciliation" may be over, but the marriage ceremonies are not. Two days later there is more feasting, more drinking, and the so-called *shinak-gagerös* (i. e., "the twirling of a wooden cup with a long handle") take place. The one toward whom the cuphandle points on stopping after having been twirled must drink its contents. The young people who take part in this drink-feast do not leave the groom's home till there is no more beer left to refill the cup. The old folks have their turn in the celebration in the evening, when the young are obliged to serve the old. One of the main features on the programme is the obligation of all the "old-timers" to take a turn at dancing, ending with a dance of the host and hostess, who, however, have the privilege of exemption from dancing if they drink a cup of beer instead. On this occasion the Kabardian minnesingers called *geguako* are especially welcome. They travel from village to village, playing on their two-stringed instruments, singing and composing beautiful lyrics[20] as the German minnesingers and the French and Italian troubadours once used to do. To each well-wishing of the *geguako* the guests answer with a joyful "Amen!," confirming their "So be it!" with a sip of beer.[21]

The ceremony of thrice walking around the hearth constitutes an important part of the Cherkess wedding just as in Abkhazia.[22]

The official marriage contract is made by representatives of the bride and groom in the presence of the local mullah. Holding both representatives by the hand, he first asks the representative of the bride: "Do you take A as husband for B?" The answer is a simple "Yes!" He then asks the representative of the groom: "Do you take B as wife for A?" "Yes!" This interrogation is repeated a second and a third time. The mullah then recites a prayer and all present, raising their hands heavenward, answer "Amen!"[23]

The expenses entailed in such an elaborate wedding would often bring complete economic ruin to the family, much the same as Caucasian funerals. Ladyženskij implies, however, that such expensive weddings are a thing of the past.[24]

The NORTHEASTERN CAUCASIANS. As our example of a Chechen marriage we have chosen that of the Ingushi, for this group of Chechens has preserved much more of their ancient culture than any other. In so doing, however, we must make allowance for tribal differences.

[20] Hahn, *op. cit.*, pp. 46—49, from whom we have also taken the description of the "Reconciliation." Hahn gives us a few examples of these lyrics, *op. cit.*, pp. 49 ff.

[21] Hahn, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

[22] Dirr, AGKB, p. 25.

[23] Ladyženskij, FT, p. 199.

[24] Ladyženskij, FT, p. 208. See also Dubrovin, *Istorija* for a fairly good description of a Cherkess wedding, I, i, pp. 142 ff, 147 f.

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As soon as the procession reaches the bridegroom's house, his mother takes a plate of honey and smears some on the bride's lips and extends her an official invitation to enter.[51] The honey symbolizes the readiness of the mother-in-law to offer the bride any and every gift, but especially the greatest gift of all, entrance into the household.[52] A pleasant and sweet life awaits her in such friendly surroundings. 585

Now an ox (or any other head of large cattle)[53] is led before the bride. The ear of the animal is then cut as a sign that from now on it belongs to the bride alone.[54] If the bride stands motionless in the doorway, everyone understands that the bride is still not satisfied and therefore a second animal must be brought before her and its ear must be cut in a similar manner. Sometimes a horse is presented to her instead of two oxen, in which case a clump of hair is cut off the horse's tail, leaving the ear intact.[55] On accepting these gifts, the bride is congratulated, welcomed, honoured with songs and pistol shots, and is then solemnly led across the threshold of the *saklia* by her mother-in-law. Sometimes, as the bride steps over the threshold, the bridegroom, standing behind the door, gives his wife three slight strokes[56] symbolizing his authority over her.[57]

The programme now calls for a tug of war between the villagers and the members of the groom's household. A carpet (the one the bride stepped on when crossing the threshold) is placed between the two groups, everyone taking as good a hold of it as possible and then pulling with all his strength, the villagers pulling away from the house and the others toward it. This is, doubtless, a form of ceremonial bride capture. The winners receive a special delicacy called *airisa*, a mixture of flour, butter and honey, as well as their favourite drink *buza*, while the losers must be satisfied with the drink.[58] 583 585 [524] [262]

There are two other forms of ceremonial bride capture, found among other Lesghians. In Dido-land the friends of the groom "break" into the bride's house, throw a sheep-skin over her head, and drag her into the street, where the villagers throw filth at her till she reaches her new home. The Andi of T'indi are supposed to have had the following custom: the bride riding on a horse, accompanied by men and women armed with torches and long poles, rides toward the groom who is similarly guarded. When the two groups meet, a mock battle is declared. The parties must try to extinguish each other's torches. In

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[51] Kovalevskij, *l. c.* Amirov omits this ceremony.

[52] This is Kovalevskij's interpretation. Unfortunately our sources fail to mention whether the mother-in-law accompanies her action with words as in the case of other North Caucasians or not.

[53] Amirov, *op. cit.*, p. 31, who mentions the possibility of presenting a horse instead of two oxen.

[54] Kovalevskij, *l. c.*; Amirov, *l. c.*

[55] Amirov, *l. c.*

[56] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 186.

[57] Amirov's and Kovalevskij's interpretation.

[58] Amirov, *op. cit.*, pp. 31 f.

1 [Sic--Ana/ysf]